

MEMORIAL
Of
MRS. MARY DUSTON PAGE WATSON

Who Died January 17, 1912

Read Before the
Duston-Dustin Association

In Unity Church
Haverhill, Mass.

October 16, 1913

By Rev. Jesse G. MacMurphy



Reprinted in Book Form, Nov. 1924

BRIEF ACQUAINTANCE.

My acquaintance with the honored leader of this Dustin Association, who died January 17, 1912, was through a number of years, but during short periods. It was her custom to visit relatives in Derry, N. H., and especially her niece, Mrs. Frank Corson; who was also interested in gathering material for the Dustin Genealogy.

On some of these occasions, she became known to me, as engaged in compiling records of the descendants of Hannah Duston of Haverhill; and also as the leader in trying to draw the living descendants together in an annual meeting and entertainment at some convenient place; and furthermore my acquaintance became extended by seeing her at public worship on Sundays. The impression grew upon me, at each returning visit, that she was rather remarkable as a christian woman with a mission to fulfill, and that she was anxious to accomplish results while she had strength and the means to continue; and it never occurred to my mind, that she would be so soon cut off, and removed from her very interesting occupations.

My Connections.

Through this acquaintance, it soon became known to me, that I had a direct line of descent from the famous Hannah Duston of pioneer history. There was no mistake in the proof, that my great grandmother, Hannah Watts, was a great granddaughter of Hannah Duston, and that between the first and the seventh generation of this lineage there is not found to be wanting a single name, or date of birth, marriage, etc., necessary to completion of the record of intervening generations. My mother, Sarah Gibson, remembered her grandmother, Hannah Watts; and had many small tokens of this remembrance. It is quite probable, that according to the custom of the period, Hannah Watts was named in honor of this great grand-mother, Hannah Duston, of Haverhill,

It is also quite probable that my sister was named Hannah in remembrance of her great grandmother, Hannah Watts, and incidentally commemorating a remarkable personage in history; of whose relationship the family had for a time lost the tradition. After the discovery of this intimate connection with the Duston family, we began to take an interest in the manuscript book of records being compiled so diligently by

Mrs. Mary Duston Page Watson and we very naturally desired to assist in the development of her genealogical history of the Duston family.

This great work, so laboriously conducted by her several years, should not be allowed to fail on account of her death. It would be a great calamity to have the work stop with all that material collected going to waste, as it will surely do if the book is not printed. Certainly this Duston Book should be finished and printed. It is an obligation we owe to Mrs. Watson, who gave of her time, her strength, and her means, to gather records of exceeding value to historians of the future; of inestimable value to those who are engaged in genealogical research; and very naturally to those who are in anyway connected with the family of Thomas and Hannah (Emerson) Duston and appreciate the hardship of that memorable event in history of the night of March 15, 1697.

The Annual Meetings.

With the acquaintance of Mrs. Watson came the annual invitation to attend the meetings of the Duston Association. These meetings were the occasions for larger friendship with hundreds of living descend-

ants, gathered from wide fields of labor and experience. These descendants enlightened each other, with legends and stories of peculiar interest and characteristic homeliness of expression, to emphasize their kinship.

In the long lines of descent, through so many generations, the fondness for souvenirs and ancient relics, caused many curious circumstances of the past to be brought to light, and many curious implements of husbandry and housekeeping to be exhibited; and so of these gatherings came an extraordinary museum of real Duston antiquities, the pewter tankard, the bloody napkin, and the tomahawk, are only striking samples of the increasing collection. Works of art and craft were assembled year by year, that added to the history of the Duston family. Mrs. Watson's genius for erecting monuments has led to many more or less permanent markers of history. Pictures and views of buildings, and scenes and events, and things of the past, contribute to the completion of the design, to perpetuate the remembrance of the heroic and courageous acts of our common ancestor.

We owe a memorial of gratitude for the grouping of these many descendants, for

photographing; among the many faces already may be noticed some, who will never greet us again in this or similar groups; and the face of our late leader in this association is an example of a vanished presence, that will never be seen at our meetings or our banquets. Let us express the hope and confidence that these meetings will not be abandoned, nor these pleasant occasions of interchanging traditions and experiences be given up, for we must always regard the cultivation of this spirit of veneration, for splendid achievements of the generations, that have preceded us, as worthy of our time and attention. We must be glad, that this woman had the courage and perseverance to accomplish so much that is ennobling, although she died in the midst of her endeavors. We are glad for the foundations of a good fellowship, continued through many years; we are thankful for a carefully prepared manuscript of the records of the descendants of our common ancestor, Hannah Duston. If nothing more were added to the record, and it should be published, the book would be of great value. In reality no book of this kind can ever be completed. There are omissions impossible to supply, and daily the conditions of

the great genealogical tree are changing. Daily there are names to be added, and dates of important events to be chronicled. And so the immediate editing and publication of Mrs. Watson's manuscript is imperative for the good of the Association, as well as a duty we owe to the memory of her indefatigable labors, in a very difficult service.

Her Generosity.

Before closing, I want to add one more tribute to the late friend of all this company. She was always ready to contribute financially, to the best of her ability, to any good work among her associates. When she attended the services of the church she desired to contribute liberally to the support of the institution. She often made special donations, by checks or otherwise, for christian charities and philanthropy, in places where she was not a regular communicant or attendant, and where no special obligation was resting upon her to be free or generous.

For one instance of her disposition to assist in the work of the christian church, she sometimes observed a lack of sufficient number of hymnbooks to accommodate a full congregation, and she of her own ac-

cord ordered from the publishing house quite abundantly of these hymnals. Then she took the time and trouble to write inside the cover of each hymnbook, the name of the church and city or town, and the date, with the bare announcement, that these books were presented to the congregation by Mrs. Mary D. P. Watson. And wherever she chanced to be on the greater church festivals, as Christmas, Easter, Ascension or Whitsunday, she was sure to make a special offering, proportionate to her means and ability to contribute. While this part of my tribute to the memory of Mrs. Watson is aside from the general purposes of this memorial service, here this afternoon, I trust in the conviction, that you have always found her kind and considerate toward all of you under all circumstances and always unprejudiced concerning the faith of others.

Memorial Prayers.

"I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, Write From hence forth blessed are the dead who die in the Lord; even so saith the Spirit; for they rest from their labors."

"Our Father, who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven, Give us

this day our daily bread, And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us, And lead us not into temptation; But deliver us from evil, For Thine is the kingdom, and the power and the glory, forever and ever, Amen."

"O Saviour of the world, who by thy cross and precious, Blood' hast redeemed us; Save us, and help us, we humbly beseech thee O Lord."

"Almighty God, with whom do live the spirits of those who depart hence in the Lord and with whom the souls of the faithful, after they are delivered from the burden of the flesh, are in joy and felicity; We give thee hearty thanks for the good examples of all those thy servants, who, having finished their course in faith, do now rest from their labor, and especially for the many endearing qualities of mind and heart; in our late leader and kinswoman in this association, Mrs. Mary D. P. Watson, whose memorial is here celebrated. And we beseech thee, that we, with all, those who are departed in the true faith of thy holy Name, may have our perfect consummation and bliss, both in body and soul, in thy eternal and everlasting glory, through Jesus Christ Our Lord, Amen."

"O Merciful God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the resurrection and the life; in whom whosoever believeth, shall live, though he die; and whosoever lieth and believeth in him, shall not die eternally, who also hath taught us by his holy Apostle Saint Paul, not to be sorry, as men without hope, for those who sleep in him; we humbly beseech thee, O Father, to raise us from the death of sin unto the life of righteousness; that, when we depart this life, we may rest in him; and that, at the general Resurrection in the last day, we may be **found** acceptable in thy sight, and receive that blessing, which thy well-beloved Son shall then pronounce to all who love and fear thee, saying, Come ye blessed children of my Father, receive the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world. Grant this we beseech thee, O Merciful Father, through Jesus Christ, our Mediator and Redeemer. Amen."

"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, be with us all evermore. Amen."

